CTS (WaTech)
Customer Satisfaction Survey
Executive Summary

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Methodology

- On behalf of WaTech, Great Lakes Marketing contacted 83 Washington state agencies via email to request a telephone interview. The agency contact information was provided by WaTech. Agencies were told the research was being sponsored by WaTech and that their information would be used to compare their experiences today with those reported in the baseline survey conducted in 2016.
    - GLM completed 71 telephone interviews, representing 64 different agencies. The final list of respondents was provided to WaTech under separate cover.
    - The 2018 questionnaire was the same that was used in 2016 with the exception of adding a few additional probing questions and asking specifically about Support.Watech.Wa.Gov.
- GLM conducted the phone interviews between March 20 and April 24, 2018.
- Several agencies requested that the interview be conducted with a few participants rather than one individual. Group participants were typically selected by the agency CIO.
    - Grades given by the group reflected the "best combined assessment" for the agency overall.
    - Seven DSHS interviews were conducted. Their scores were averaged and represent one agency in the scoring and report.
- A typical school grading scale of A to F was used for grading factors. The following grade descriptions were given to the respondents:
    - An "A" means WaTech could not do better and exceeds all of your expectations.
    - A "B" means WaTech is above average.
    - A "C" means WaTech does as you expect.
    - A "D" means WaTech is not performing at your expected levels and improvement is needed.
    - An "F" means WaTech's performance is not acceptable and is failing to meet your needs.
- To calculate the mean average scores, the following scale was used:

o A = 5	o B = 4	o C = 3	o D = 2	o F = 1

- From the mean average scores, the following grading scale was used:
    - A "+" was given to the grade if the mean average was .7 to.9. For example, a 3.7, 3.8 and 3.9 are listed as a C+.
    - A straight grade was used if the mean average was .3 to .6. For example, a 3.6 is listed as a C.
    - A "-" was given to the grade if the mean average was .0 to .2. For example, a 3.1 is listed as a C-.
- The final sample includes 8 Large/XL agencies, 25 Medium agencies, and 31 Small agencies.
    - The agency size designation was determined by WaTech.

Prevailing Themes

Value

- WaTech continues to be perceived as more expensive than private sector offerings. This price and value disparity seems to be widening in 2018. The impact of this sentiment is exacerbated by the fact agencies find the invoices confusing, believe WaTech pricing is not transparent, and do not believe WaTech is a good value (based on the combination of the product, the level of technical expertise, the resources behind maintaining services, and customer service levels).

Communication and Partnership

- Agencies are still frustrated with several elements of their relationship with WaTech. Agencies feel WaTech does not engage them in a timely manner when important product decisions are being made. They need a more collaborative relationship so service changes reflect the needs of the agencies.
- Even though some improvement was noted in 2018, WaTech still does not communicate effectively to its diverse customer base. Communications need to be more timely, customized to match the technical prowess of the recipient, and sent using the right delivery mode to match the urgency of the situation (e.g., email, phone call, etc.).
- WaTech still needs to make it a priority to understand the role of the agency and which IT tools are vital to the success of the agency in meeting its mission. The CAMs have helped to build this bridge between the agency and WaTech.
- CAMs are a vital component in building relationships with agencies.

Structure and Product Mix

- WaTech is still perceived to be acting like a monopoly. Agencies believe WaTech does not commit to being responsive and communicative because it does not face pressure from a competitive marketplace.
- Agencies describe WaTech as having silos. These communication barriers within WaTech inhibit the ease of working with WaTech and contribute to the inconsistencies in the communication flow and content.
- Agencies are not fully satisfied with the product mix offered by WaTech. Some agencies want additional services and others would prefer that WaTech focus its product mix to core services only.
- Agencies accept that WaTech will not be an industry leader with respect to innovation; however, this limits the ability of agencies to be innovative and responsive to their constituents.

Insights and Commentary

Is the organizational structure of WaTech optimized to provide a satisfactory customer experience?

- In 2016, the primary recommendation was to create a more customer-service oriented structure that gave agencies access to support personnel within WaTech. The same basic recommendation is relevant in 2018; however, the barrier may not be on the perimeter of WaTech. The barrier may be that WaTech is not structured to respond to its diverse client base because of internal barriers.
    - The "silos" within WaTech limit WaTech's ability to provide "total solutions."
    - Even when agencies access a helpful resource within WaTech, they are still limited by internal barriers that inhibit the information flow.
    - Agencies need support from cross-functional teams.
    - CAMs need access to information throughout WaTech (which requires that CAMs be given priority status when they request help).
    - Is WaTech structured to be a provider of IT services, or a consultant to agencies, or both?

Is the product mix optimized to fulfill the needs of the diverse customer mix and work within the limits of WaTech?

- Agencies are still dissatisfied with many elements of the products purchased through WaTech.
    - Several specific examples of core services not meeting the needs of agencies are shared by respondents in this research and have been shared with WaTech in other forums.
    - This lack of responsiveness begs the question: should WaTech focus on delivering only core products?

What is the WaTech VALUE PROPOSITION?

- In several different sections of this report, agencies question the value of what WaTech offers. At this point in time, WaTech needs to evaluate its total product offering (IT products, support services, consulting, etc.) and determine the value it adds at each contact point.
    - Agencies do not describe WaTech as providing "better" IT solutions than could be obtained from the private sector.
    - WaTech is not described as cost-effective or offering a good value.
    - WaTech is not described as offering more innovative, integrated, or secure products.
- Agencies may need to be more informed as to the role of WaTech and the value it offers the state (and state agencies).

Key Findings

Marketing of Services

- Communication of offerings from all marketing sources is described as:
  - Confusing (too technical)
  - Lacking relevance to individual agencies
  - Incompatible with agency business needs
  - Inconsistent (between website and CAMs, among different departments within WaTech, etc.)
  - Lacking enough information about scope of service and price
- Agencies believe they know most of what WaTech offers but either don't know how that service is relevant to their business needs or believe that the service is not the optimal solution for their needs.
  - Agencies, especially Large and XL agencies with internal expertise, are evaluating WaTech offerings against private offerings, scrutinizing for cost savings, technical compatibility, and optimal functionality.
  - Small and Medium agencies, especially those with no IT expertise, need reliable sources of information from WaTech.

Relationship

- Most agencies do not feel as if they *have* a relationship with WaTech. They want to be included in conversations early in the decision-making process so new products, services, and policy changes reflect the needs of the agency users.
- Small and Medium agencies still feel as if WaTech does not understand their limitations with respect to technical personnel, budgets, and ability to adapt to the way WaTech provides services.
  - Agencies say WaTech does not understand their mission or their customers. As a result:
    - WaTech interrupts needed IT services at inopportune times.
    - WaTech does not understand who to communicate with regarding changes and upgrades.
    - Agency needs are not reflected in the strategic direction of WaTech.
- Agencies have noted that WaTech has made improvements since 2016, but most still expect WaTech to be more responsive.
  - New or stronger relationships with CAMs have improved the perception of WaTech's investment in being more responsive but agencies need that customer service commitment from all WaTech departments and management levels.
  - Expectations are set by private-sector service providers that are more committed to customer service.
  - Agencies attribute WaTech's lack of responsiveness to WaTech not understanding the functions of the agency.
  - When WaTech is not responsive it is interpreted as being disrespectful and that degrades the relationship.
  - When WaTech is not responsive, the agency is not able to be responsive to their clients.

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Communication

- The website is the primary tool used by agencies to learn about products and services. However, user experience with the website is not optimized. Products and services are not presented in the ways in which agencies want to learn about offerings.
- Poor communications are still the fundamental cause of dissatisfaction with various elements of WaTech service delivery. More so this year, communications that are received appear to be inconsistent. Customers do not believe WaTech has a "process" in place that triggers appropriate and timely communication efforts.
- WaTech is described as having "silos" which contribute to the communication inconsistencies.
- Increasingly, customers of all products and services want more control over how they receive communications. This is especially true for WaTech communications because they need information to be received by the right person within their agency.
- WaTech is perceived to be acting independently of the agencies. Agencies hear about changes in services after decisions have been made. This is especially frustrating since agencies are dependent on WaTech and changes typically have a major impact on operational activities at the agency level.
- Furthermore, many agencies are not staffed to respond to product and service changes at the pace WaTech expects. They need more advance warning.
- WaTech communications still include too much jargon. This may be a function of sending communications to the wrong person at the agency (i.e., a non-technical person).
- Agencies still feel like WaTech does not understand their mission. This has been a consistent theme since 2016 and will continue to become more frustrating over time. Each time WaTech causes a disruption due to poor timing of an update, etc., the agencies share their concern and expect more consideration in the future. The information does not appear to result in long-term conformance.
- As in 2106, agencies do not believe WaTech has a formalized communication strategy. Agencies want reliable communications—not communications when WaTech finds the time to offer updates.

Expertise & Structure

- WaTech is not perceived as a consultant because the depth of knowledge within the technical team is either not deep enough or is not accessible. Many agencies noted in 2018 that the number of subject matter experts within WaTech is declining.
- The perception exists that WaTech does not want to be in a consultancy role.
- Many agencies question if WaTech has a strategic direction.
- Small agencies feel as if WaTech is structured to meet the needs of Large/XL agencies, whereas some Large/XL agencies believe that WaTech is not structured to meet their needs so they must be making decisions for the smaller agencies.

- WaTech staff do not consistently and effectively refer agencies correctly to an appropriate WaTech associate when agencies need help or information. Many agencies believe that WaTech continues to silo its departments, which shows the lack of commitment to be full-service consultants to all agencies.

Customer Service Issues

- WaTech's efforts to improve customer service are being noticed by agency personnel but the larger agencies are still the most critical of customer service inefficiencies.
- Small agencies do not have the internal resources to recover from IT service failures. They need support from the beginning to the end of the problem.
  - Many customer service complaints are a function of the support offered after a failure occurs.
- Medium agencies are concerned that WaTech may not have the depth of knowledge and enough staff members to resolve issues in a timely fashion.
- Some of the delay in getting problems resolved is assumed to be a function of the service desk not getting information to the right technician, primarily because of a lack of cross-department training.
- Agencies still note that they are not getting enough feedback after their initial contact with the service desk. They still need and want updates even if they can check the new support site for information.
- WaTech does not "communicate" as if they understand the urgency of a resolution. Agencies want timely status updates when they are experiencing problems because they need to know somebody is working on a solution.
- Agencies want problems to be prioritized based on the severity of the problem, not the order in which the problems are reported. This would require WaTech to understand how the service failure impacts the agency's constituents.
- When agencies are dissatisfied, they complain that:
  - Better triage is needed.
  - Better customer service (ongoing communications) is needed, especially when their CAM does not know what is going on and cannot help them.
  - Communication is not at the right level (either too technical or not technical enough).
  - Staff levels are insufficient to move at the appropriate pace.
  - WaTech is not focused on solving the root cause of the problem.
- Agencies continue to want WaTech to explain why a problem occurred and how it was solved. WaTech has not made any progress with this request since 2016.

- Agencies are feeling the effects of personnel changes at WaTech; they need to have a single, consistent advocate, especially a well-trained CAM, to help them navigate WaTech.

Technology & Innovation

- Comments indicate an acceptance that WaTech will not be on the cutting edge because it is a government agency, but the agencies have become less forgiving in 2018.
  - WaTech is described as lagging the private sector, being reactionary, and being slow to progress on ideas, and the gap is widening.
- Most of the Medium to Large/XL agencies need to move more quickly than WaTech is able with respect to new offerings or technical capabilities. Because of this, many of the larger agencies have switched to other providers whenever they can. Most Small agencies are not needing to move more quickly. This variance speaks to the different expectations of WaTech among the agency mix.
- The need to communicate technology integration plans to the agencies has become more critical in 2018. Sometimes WaTech introduces services without any warning and sometimes WaTech does not roll out services when it was planned. This is a major source of agency frustration.
- Agencies have suggested that service failures, especially with email, have increased over the last few years.
- Most of the agencies continue to assume WaTech offerings are secure and in compliance with state IT standards.
  - Some who disagree are either not willing to assume this is true (because they have no "proof") or they know of a situation that colors their perception of all services.
  - More agencies in 2018 noted that their specific agency or federal standards are still, or have become, stricter than WaTech standards but WaTech has made no effort to meet those standards.
- More agencies in 2018 have noted that WaTech services are not technologically up to the industry IT standards compared to the private sector. Services are not being improved or maintained adequately.

Value & Price Structure

- WaTech continues to receive very low grades for "value" and for the fee structure being understandable.
  - Small agencies believe that most WaTech services are cost prohibitive.
  - Some expect WaTech to offer services at a lower cost because of the shared-services model.
- WaTech's prices continue to be directly compared to offerings from the private sector and are significantly higher using the price comparison approach agencies are implementing. Some agencies noted that there are more provider choices now than in 2016, such as Amazon.
- The agency's inability to understand the invoice reflects on their concerns about transparency.
  - When services are bundled, the assumption is that it is to hide costs.
  - Comments indicated that smaller agencies are most confused, and frustrated, by the allocation pool.
  - CAMs have started to help agencies understand their invoices but this takes time away from other important CAM functions.

Table One
Factors with Average 2018 Grade of D or D+

Question	A	B	C	D	F	2018 Mean	2016 Mean
WaTech offers the best value.	1	9	16	19	16	2.3 D	2.6 D
WaTech's fee structure is understandable.	1	12	21	17	11	2.6 D	2.7 D+
WaTech acts as if they understand the impact of changes/upgrades on your organization.	6	8	14	26	8	2.6 D	2.8 D+
Based on your experience, your needs are reflected in the strategic direction of WaTech.	5	14	17	19	8	2.8 D+	2.9 D+
WaTech is transparent in their fee structure.	3	16	18	16	9	2.8 D+	3.1 C-
WaTech communicates about their product and service offerings in a way that matches how you want to learn about them.	2	14	26	21	1	2.9 D+	3.0 C-
WaTech offers solutions at the right point of the innovation curve.	3	10	22	19	2	2.9 D+	3.0 C-

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Table Two
Factors with Average 2018 Grade of B- through C-

Question	A	B	C	D	F	2018 Mean	2016 Mean
WaTech personnel treat your team with respect.	26	24	11	2	1	4.1 B-	4.3 B
WaTech service offerings are secure and in compliance with state IT standards.	18	21	15	4	1	3.9 C+	4.2 B-
WaTech appears to be dedicated to complete and comprehensive resolution when service is impacted.	13	21	19	7	2	3.6 C	3.8 C+
Communications are timely and understandable during the incident.	10	22	19	6	4	3.5 C	3.9 C+
WaTech offers technology that works and is reliable.	9	22	17	11	3	3.4 C	3.7 C+
Based on what you experience, WaTech is focused on continuous improvement with respect to customer service.	5	28	21	10	0	3.4 C	3.7 C+
WaTech technical support personnel can diagnose problems effectively.	7	21	17	12	4	3.2 C-	3.6 C
WaTech understands the urgency of your call or contact.	7	20	18	12	4	3.2 C-	3.6 C
Based on what you experience, WaTech is focused on continuous improvement with respect to their technology.	6	20	27	8	0	3.4 C	3.5 C
WaTech acts as if they value the relationship they have with you.	10	16	23	12	3	3.3 C	3.6 C
WaTech technical support can discuss their own offerings and direct you to others in WaTech when appropriate.	4	22	23	9	3	3.2 C-	3.8 C+
WaTech is a consultant to your organization.	7	17	20	17	2	3.2 C-	3.3 C
WaTech communicates information about changes/upgrades effectively to the right audiences.	7	16	24	14	1	3.2 C-	3.4 C
WaTech communicates changes to project schedules in a timely manner.	7	14	28	7	6	3.1 C-	3.6 C
WaTech technical support can diagnose problems quickly.	7	13	22	15	4	3.1 C-	3.5 C
WaTech services allow you to be more responsive to your clients.	7	12	23	17	1	3.1 C-	3.4 C

Overall Interpretations

Marketing of Services

- WaTech continues to miss the opportunity to market its services in a way that matches how agencies want to learn about them. Agencies are seeking "total solutions." WaTech is offering "products" and assuming the agencies know what the products are and how to optimize the offerings. They do not. It is getting even more confusing to agencies in 2018.
- Agencies still want a push marketing strategy (i.e., WaTech "sells" or pushes it products) rather than a pull strategy (i.e., agencies pull the services by requesting services). A pull strategy assumes the market understands the product offerings, knows how to buy the products, etc. This is not the situation for most agencies, especially the smaller ones.
    - o CAMs are helping some agencies understand WaTech service offerings, but they are not "selling" total solutions.
- The opportunity exists to offer more services to agencies; however, it will require a concerted effort and a "total solution" selling approach. WaTech would also need to show how the services compare to private vendor offerings in terms of reliability and cost.
- Large/XL agencies are used to working with service providers in all sectors that learn what the agencies need and then "sell" the relevant services. They are not used to "self-service" technology solutions providers.

Relationship

- WaTech continues to approach the market as if it is a monopoly. To the extent this may be true, it sets the tone for a forced relationship rather than a mutually beneficial relationship.
- All agencies want more inclusion in the processes. They feel as if WaTech makes decisions without agency input, especially as WaTech management continues to change. This is a grave source of frustration since agencies feel they are captive buyers.
- In 2016 agencies were frustrated at not having a person who could provide a consistent point of contact when they needed help. The assignment of CAMs to all agencies has now helped give most agencies that "go to" person when immediate resolution is needed.
- CAMs have helped agency/WaTech relationships, however, many comments from agencies indicate that WaTech is still not proactive enough, is not responsive enough, and not knowledgeable about the individual agencies. These factors combine to erode WaTech's position as a consultant.
- Agencies want a stronger "partnership" with WaTech. They continue to want more opportunities to provide their feedback, not just through customer satisfaction surveys. They need to know that WaTech is working to be responsive to their total agency, not just their IT needs.

Communication

- Agencies are still trying to understand and prioritize the many communications they get from WaTech. Some agencies feel the distribution lists are not correct and they aren't sure who should be correcting that. Some agencies, especially the smaller ones with no dedicated IT staff, are unable to understand the communications. These frustrations culminate in a feeling that information flows but "communication" does not exist. Communications appear to be one-way and potentially not constructed to optimize comprehension among the right audiences.
- Agencies expect a more customized, understandable approach to communications. They continue to believe that WaTech has genericized communications across all agencies.
- Without a two-way communication approach, WaTech has no way to listen to, and react to, agency concerns, especially about how WaTech is addressing disruption issues.
- It has been a consistent theme since 2016 that agencies do not believe WaTech has a strategic, well-developed plan and timeline for integrating new technology or discontinuing outdated services. They continue to "assume" WaTech is not on the right track. Agencies need to hear about this direction from WaTech, and in a timely manner.
- WaTech still has not created communication models that are based on the foundation that agencies want to hear, directly from WaTech, that service offerings are secure. As agency and federal IT standards become stricter than state IT standards, agencies do not start with the assumption that they are in compliance. They want WaTech to understand their needs and communicate compliance confirmation or plans to help them with compliance.
- Agencies in 2018 have noted an improvement in WaTech's responsiveness, but still note that WaTech does not have an incentive to be responsive because agencies must use WaTech.

Expertise & Structure

- The assignment of CAMs to all agencies has helped WaTech meet the unique needs of some of the Small and Medium agencies but those agencies still need consistent access to more technical support and customized solutions.
  - Smaller agencies are not able to optimize solutions because of their limited ability to incorporate and understand the breadth of WaTech service offerings.
- Agencies consider themselves to be unique with unique personnel and customer needs. WaTech continues to be described as treating all agencies alike. Therefore, they don't see *their* specific needs reflected in WaTech's planning. Agencies understand the difficult position that WaTech is in, but it is still a source of frustration. This is a consistent theme from 2016 and will continue to be unless WaTech dedicates resources to understanding agency needs and customizing solutions for those needs.

Customer Service Issues

- Most agencies continue to be satisfied with the technical support team's ability to refer appropriately within WaTech. However, agencies still believe that departments are too siloed at WaTech, leading to slow or inaccurate referrals. Agencies need ownership of an issue.
  - In the ideal scenario, CAMs would facilitate these "hand offs" and then follow-up to be sure the correct connections were made.
- During the "crisis" of a failure or outage (which it is typically perceived as crisis at the agency level), WaTech personnel need to be responsive, communicative, receptive to agency feedback, accepting blame (whether or not it is due), and empathetic.
  - Agencies noted in 2018 that there is still inconsistency across teams in WaTech, with some being credited as excellent during a crisis and others still unresponsive.
- If agencies do not get the right level of feedback after they contact the help desk, they begin to "go around" the help desk. In 2018 many agencies have said they have created these "go around" systems, and have found other WaTech resources, so have been bypassing the help desk.
- Agencies are still requesting better communication throughout the entire process, from ticket to resolution. They assume nothing is moving forward on their request if they do not hear about the progress.
  - In 2018, more agencies noted that they not only need quick and complete resolution, but they also want a full explanation of why an issue occurred and exactly how it was resolved. They don't think WaTech is dedicated to understanding the root cause of issues and therefore, they are not preventing them from occurring again.
- Smaller agencies continue to need a total solution that requires a different level of expertise: a technical fix but non-technical communications.

Technology & Innovation

- Even though agencies understand that WaTech may have some external constraints, agencies are getting increasingly frustrated that WaTech is not able to offer what would be readily available through other providers. WaTech has done a poor job managing agency expectations and communicating details of the constraints in a way that agencies understand.
- Agencies continue to suggest that WaTech does not have a well-developed timeline for integrating new technology. This is a consistent source of frustration because it shows that WaTech does not understand the impact of change on agencies.
- Agencies do not expect WaTech to be an innovation leader. They understand the constraints. However, they continue to expect WaTech to understand the needs of the agencies so WaTech's limited resources can be focused on the technologies that the agencies perceive themselves to need. Agencies noted in 2018 that WaTech's lack of focus on agency business needs has not improved.

Value & Price Structure

- All of the scores for value, invoice understandability, and pricing transparency continue to be low, and have gotten worse in 2018.
  - Agency personnel are frustrated when they are trying to create budgets, compare costs, and make strategic decisions based on estimating how changes in what they buy might impact their IT costs. Agencies report in 2018 that it has become even more difficult when no advance warning is given for new service introduction or old service discontinuation.
- WaTech still needs to determine which solutions it can competitively offer. With that information, strategies need to be developed to determine the best business strategy for WaTech (i.e., what is the differential advantage to use WaTech if it is not cost effective?).
- Agencies are not willing to pay more for services that can be obtained at a better value (total product and service support) from the private sector. This is a consistent theme from 2016 and the value gap between WaTech and the private sector appears to be widening. Furthermore, when using WaTech is "required," agencies are more critical, especially if they are not treated like a valued customer.
  - Agencies do not like being held captive, especially when they assume better options, for price and technology, exist.
  - More agencies, of all sizes, are trying to go outside of WaTech for services, at every available opportunity.
- In 2016, agencies were asking for a simplified invoice and access to an individual who can definitively explain the invoice. Some agencies in 2018 have reported that their CAM meets with them regularly to review their invoices. The invoices have not been simplified but the CAM is trying to simplify through explanation as best they can.

Overall Recommendations

Marketing of Services

- WaTech needs to continually review which marketing strategy WaTech can implement on a consistent basis.
  - The service catalog must always be updated and accurate. It must be easy to understand for all agency personnel, with or without technical expertise. Services must be clearly defined to fit agency business needs.
  - It was suggested in 2016 that WaTech should develop a sales approach with product specialists who can identify which agencies could benefit from the service and can work with the agency until the product is fully integrated into the agency's systems. In 2018, it appears that CAMs are trying to fill that role for some agencies. WaTech needs to decide if they are going to formalize that program and fully train CAMs for that role, or also develop product specialists to work with the CAMs.
- WaTech needs to determine if its role is to provide only the services when agencies ask WaTech to provide them, or if WaTech is going to actively "sell" its solutions.

Relationships

- An integral function of the CAM should be to schedule meetings with agencies for the single purpose of reviewing their entire IT solution set, and then individual short and long term planning should be documented and reviewed on a specific schedule.
    - For larger agencies, this meeting may require other WaTech staff members, such as product specialists. This would enable a full solutions review, as well as show the agency that WaTech wants to understand the agency needs and build a stronger relationship.

Communication

- WaTech needs to continue evaluating their communication process internally so all staff are consistent in their communications with agencies. When information is inconsistent from WaTech, agencies doubt the accuracy of all information. (This is exacerbated by the fact that agencies create their own access points so they may not be getting information from the "right" WaTech staff member.)
- In 2016, it was recommended that WaTech create a task force to audit communications that have been sent to agencies in the past three months. This is still important for WaTech to consider in 2018.
    - Evaluate the content for ease-of-comprehension, timeliness, etc. Are the most important messages being given priority communication status?
    - Agencies want customized communications. Do the relevant agency staff members know how to opt-in or opt-out of communications? Should the CAMs be communicating the more important and impactful messages?
- The CAMs are helping with the two-way communication needed to develop better agency relationships, but they are not the single point of contact. Larger agencies, who use a lot of WaTech services have many other interactions with other WaTech staff, and sometimes those interactions are setting a negative tone.
    - WaTech staff should be asked to identify the internal barriers they face when they are trying to solve "issues" for agencies. These barriers need to be reduced. Staff should be empowered to help the agency reach a resolution.
- Communication patterns should continually be evaluated. Are systems in place to provide feedback on a timely basis to keep the agency updated to show respect for their time and the inconvenience they are experiencing?
- WaTech should continue to refine Support.WaTech.Wa.Gov to meet the needs of all agencies and staff expertise. It must be timely, accurate, and reliable or agencies will stop using it immediately.
    - The site does not replace other communications during a service failure. Agencies still expect consistent, personalized updates.
- WaTech should still determine if agencies can be categorized into levels with one group designated for outbound technical communications, a second group who prefers using the website, and a third group might choose just one communication when the problem has been resolved.

Expertise & Structure

- Agencies are more frustrated in 2018 believing that the impact of changes are not fully evaluated before being implemented. WaTech needs to either explain to agencies how changes are reviewed and evaluated and/or commit to instituting a Change Control Board (Change Management Board).
- It was suggested in 2016 that WaTech create a portal for customers so they can monitor open tickets, update their contact lists, read bulletins and submit questions. Support.WaTech.Wa.Gov has been valuable to most agencies who know about it and have used it.
  - WaTech needs to make sure all agencies know the site exists and understand its purpose and capabilities.
- WaTech should continue the positive momentum created with CAMs being assigned to all agencies.
  - A formal training program should be created so that all agencies experience the same relationships and expertise.
    - CAMs must be empowered to solve problems and serve as the single point of contact. Otherwise, agencies create their own access points.
    - If product specialists are also needed for larger agencies, develop that inclusion as part of the CAM training program.
  - Make sure CAM assignments allow enough time for CAMs to spend time with the agency so they understand the personnel structure, unique stress points, technical and business needs, etc.
  - A CAM succession plan must be developed quickly. Any gaps in re-assignments will undermine the relationships built.

Customer Service Issues

- Customer service training should be ongoing with all WaTech personnel. The topics to always include should be:
  - How to work with agencies in a crisis/during a service failure.
  - How to accept blame (work under the scenario the customer is right and WaTech may have made an error).
- WaTech should do an internal review of the tactics used by the successful problem solvers within the organization that agencies use as their "go around" contacts. WaTech could use those tactics in the customer service training program.
- The technical staff not only needs technical expertise, but also needs training to interface with agency personnel during a crisis situation. Technical staff need to understand how to diffuse "heated" conversations and accept their role as a problem solver or expert referral source to another department, regardless of the source of the problem.
  - If the CAMs will continue to have a more active role in interfacing between the agency and WaTech's technical staff, CAMs and technical teams should understand each other's role in the process and all adhere to a standard process of communicating and problem solving with agencies.
- The support website has not replaced the need for a more formalized process of updating agencies on the progress of their tickets and informing them of the cause of the issue.

Technology & Innovation

- Agencies expect WaTech to have technology constraints; however, they do not want to be forced to work with a supplier that is both slower to introduce technology and non-responsive when issues arise. WaTech needs to focus on:
  - Communicating how and when new technologies will be integrated, and existing technologies changed or discontinued. These communications must be timely, giving agencies enough time to prepare for the changes.
  - Communicating the process for evaluating and prioritizing the introduction of new technologies and making changes to existing technologies. An accurate timeline for introductions must also be communicated.
- WaTech needs to seek feedback from agencies regarding their perception of services with respect to functionality, security, etc. WaTech then needs to communicate on a consistent basis how they are trying to meet the agency technology needs. In addition, WaTech still needs a platform to populate the conversation with facts about WaTech's services if misinformation exists.
- WaTech needs to seek feedback from agencies on the services from outside sources they are looking for the most. WaTech should concentrate on new technologies that are most desired, meet the most business needs, and can be introduced and maintained successfully by WaTech and its agencies.

Value & Price Structure

- WaTech still needs to evaluate its service offerings to determine which solutions WaTech can offer at an equal value as the private sector (value defined as cost, functionality, technical support, etc.).
  - A communication plan to educate agencies on the "value" of using WaTech needs to be created.
- WaTech should determine if they can make invoices more transparent and easy to understand by adding more details about bundled services. Agencies want to know what they are paying for, especially if they feel they are paying for services they don't use or want.
- Even though CAMs are helping some agencies with invoice reviews in 2018, WaTech should provide a more extensive training program for the CAMs on understanding invoices for their respective agencies.